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6 August 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: ITEM, "CHINESE COMMUNISTS . . ." PAGE 8 OF O/CI
DAILY DIGEST, 1 AUGUST 1951

1. In the comment which O/CI makes relating to Chinese Communist losses in Korea, the following sentence terminates the paragraph of comment: "Although intensive recruiting has restored Chinese Communist field forces to their pre-Korea numerical level of approximately 2,000,000, the Chinese have lost a significant proportion - possibly as high as 25 percent - of their best-trained and best-indoctrinated troops."

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2. With respect to this statement, I should like to make two points. In the first place, the statement is couched not as an estimate but as a statement of fact, e.g., the Chinese have lost 25 percent of their best-trained and best-indoctrinated troops. In a matter so conjectural as this, I submit more caution would have been appropriate.

3. In the second place, even if the statement had been couched in estimate form, I am unable to explain on what evidence such an estimate could be sustained. At the time that the National Estimates Board held interagency meetings on the text of NIE-32: Effects of Operations in Korea on Communist China,

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Mr. Langer decided not to send

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the matter of the type and quality of Chinese Communist losses in Korea was thoroughly explored.

4. The results were negative; no intelligence agency could say anything of consequence on the subject. All agencies were united in their feeling that it was critically important to try to estimate the real effect of 600,000 casualties on Chinese Communist combat troops, and all agencies joined the National Estimates Board in requesting that G-2 do its utmost to identify the nature of these battle losses. Partially as a result of this request, G-2 systematically re-evaluated materials at hand in Washington; it also cabled the field. After two or three weeks, G-2 representatives reported that as yet they had found no evidence to indicate what proportion of Chinese Communist casualties had occurred among elite troops or what proportion among the non-elite. Finally G-2 agreed to incorporate into the estimate the following pale sentence in paragraph 16: "among these casualties have been an undetermined, but considerable number of the better trained and politically more reliable troops . . . "

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5. Although the O/CI Daily Digest is for circulation in CIA only, there is always danger that it may be informally passed outside the Agency. Should this particular item get around, the results might well be distressing.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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Date

6 Aug

FROM: Sherman Kent

TO:

Mr Langer

You may well
choose not to send
this to Jackson -
but it's my feeling
that ~~that~~ he or King
Douglas should be
in formally put on
notice that this kind
of ~~exercise~~ playing horse
with NIE's ought to stop.